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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**My dear brother, Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda,
Excellencies,
Ladies & Gentlemen**

Ndishimye cyane kubana namwe

Although I return to the land of a thousand hills under very different circumstances, I am honored to join the people of Rwanda to remember those who lost their lives tragically twenty-five years ago. People with unique stories and experiences that graced our world and left us with a reminder that we are all bound together with a common yarn that knits our fates together. When one of us cut a part of the yarn in hatred and anger at the other, we end up cutting our own life lines.

In moments like these, we are called upon to reflect on our collective consciousness and individual commitments to nurture peace and understanding. It must not take such atrocities for us to wake up and to work towards strengthening our human bond.

Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It was in 1995 that I came to Rwanda as a young man serving in an Ethiopian contingent deployed with the United Nations Assistance Mission. My short engagement in the mission allowed me to bear witness to the devastation caused by intolerance. Yet, at the same time, it made me more cognizant of the value of dialogue in nurturing understanding across lines of divides.

As human beings, two of our many blind spots are failure to acknowledge we are mirror images of each other and failure to value ourselves. If we genuinely valued ourselves as individuals and recognized our own worth, then we would also be able to pull back our blinders and see a reflection of ourselves in one another. An awareness of our blind spots ultimately heals us all from the pains we experience, and in turn inflict on others.

I strongly believe it is this particular recognition that has since turned Rwanda into such a remarkable story of reconciliation. The excellent leadership of my brother Paul Kagame coupled with the rooted commitment of the Rwandese people to make amends for mistakes of yesterday, has propelled your country into greater heights.

Acknowledging the dark periods of history, but choosing to move into the light, is a courageous act of perseverance. While history anchors us in various versions of our collective selves – **both the light and the dark** – choosing to move past difficult moments and build on our positive aspects is ultimately our saving grace.

Rwanda's commitment to reconciliation through reviving and elaborating on indigenous processes of forgiveness and redress has been a formidable undertaking. It has been and is a testament to honoring individual and collective worth. It also remains a lesson for the whole world that hope can be regained through a collective seeking for truth and reconciliation.

It is also a demonstration of MEDEMER in action. MEDEMER, a philosophy that builds on the concepts of synergy that we are currently promoting in Ethiopia, champions taking stock of what was right in our history - **our achievements, our collective efforts** - and building on all towards greater harmony and unity.

I believe that in Rwanda's narrative of MEDEMER, the values of patriotism, hard work, integrity and unity have altered your dark spot in history to one that flourishes in the spirit of co-existence. Rwanda has made great strides by learning greatly from its history, keeping the difficult times in close memory as a reminder, yet leaping into the future by harnessing on a committed citizenry that values collective growth.

On behalf of my Government and the people of Ethiopia, I applaud you for that. I applaud you for diligently planting the seeds of ‘never again’ into your green hills and valleys so that your African brothers and sisters take pride in your actions.

As we mark the twenty-fifth year of the Genocide Memorial Day, it is my sincerest hope that Rwanda continues to shine light on the power of reconciliation, dialogue and forgiveness. It is also my hope that we take this time of reflection to strengthen our commitment to never allow such tragedies in any corner of the world.

May the lives lost tragically in 1994 continue to rest in peace. And may the lives that exist today and tomorrow become a beacon of peace and understanding.

God bless both our people.

I thank you.

Murakoze cyane.